



Temple Beth Israel members and guests observe the High Holiday Yom Kippur

The ten day cycle of the Jewish New Year, *Rosh Hashanah* was made complete with the final services and a community breaking of the fast by the congregation of Temple Beth Israel on Monday evening at the synagogue on Adriaan Lacle Boulevard in Oranjestad. As is traditional, a number of island visitors joined them for the “Kol nidre,” the prayer that begs forgiveness from the Lord for the sins of the past year, led by Rabbi Marcelo Bater.

Rosh Hashanah, the first day of the month of *Tishri* is the official beginning of the Jewish New Year, and in the ten days following, people of the Jewish faith are required to reflect upon their actions and sins of the past year. This period called *Aseret Yemei Teshuva*, ends with Yom Kippur, the “Day of Atonement,” which is the holiest day of the year; a time for prayer and absolutely no labor, and fasting, when neither food nor drink is consumed. During the ten days, Jews are required to seek forgiveness from their fellowman against which they may have sinned, and to right these wrongs, if possible. Finally, on Yom Kippur they request that they are forgiven for their sins against The Lord and that the judgment entered in The Book of Life is sealed. This day is, essentially, a last appeal, a last chance to change the judgment, to demonstrate repentance and make amends.

A Jewish day is measured from sunset to sunset, so Yom Kippur began on Sunday evening, just before sunset, then ended on Monday evening with the sunset, requiring a twenty-five hour fast. Afterwards, a feast of dishes usually prepared by temple members in their homes was quite welcome, providing an opportunity for all the community to share the final task in welcoming the New Year properly, together. This is a somewhat recent tradition that was put into practice about fifteen years ago, and is anticipated and enjoyed by all.